



California Regional Water Quality Control Board

Santa Ana Region



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SUBSURFACE DISPOSAL SYSTEMS

Quail Valley / Canyon Lake Fact Sheet

May 2005

WHAT IS A SUBSURFACE DISPOSAL SYSTEM?

In most rural areas and in some suburban areas a septic tank is used along with a seepage pit or leach lines to treat domestic wastewaters including domestic sewage. The solids settle in the septic tanks and the wastewater percolates into the soil. These systems are generally referred to as septic tank-subsurface disposal systems. For the subsurface disposal systems to function properly, the septic tanks must be pumped on a regular basis, the leach lines or the seepage pits must be installed at a sufficient distance above the historic high groundwater level and the soil must be capable of percolating wastewater at a suitable rate.

POSSIBLE SEPTIC SYSTEM PROHIBITION IN THE QUAIL VALLEY/CANYON LAKE AREA

Most residents in the Quail Valley area use septic tank-subsurface disposal systems for disposal of sanitary wastewater. Many areas in Quail Valley are not suitable for the use of these systems due to poor soil conditions and high groundwater. Septic tank-subsurface disposal systems in the Quail Valley area are failing at an alarming rate. These failures cause sewage and/or untreated wastewater to surface. The surfacing wastewater contains high levels of disease causing bacteria and could cause a public health threat and water contamination.

Water drains from Quail Valley to Canyon Lake, which is a water supply source for Elsinore Valley Municipal Water District (EVMWD) customers. Bacteria-laden runoff from Quail Valley impacts that use as well as the use of Canyon Lake for recreational activities. In fact, due to high bacteria levels, Canyon Lake has been closed to body contact recreation for the last several months.

The Regional Water Quality Control Board is charged with protecting water quality in the region. Due to the public health threat and the threat to water quality from the failing septic tank-subsurface disposal systems in Quail Valley, the Regional Board directed staff to take steps necessary to consider a prohibition on the use of these systems in the Quail Valley area of Riverside County. This process will include opportunities for public participation. The Regional Board will conduct a public workshop and hearings on any proposed septic tank-subsurface disposal system prohibition and will welcome your views. If the prohibition is approved, all homes with existing septic tank-subsurface disposal systems in the Quail Valley/Canyon Lake areas will be required to connect to the sewer systems once sewer systems. A schedule for completion of the sewer connections will be established, based on the time required to construct the necessary sewer lines.

If you would like to be notified of the public meetings regarding this issue or if you have any questions, please email to: quailvalleyseptic@waterboards.ca.gov or mail us at:

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California Environmental Protection Agency



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